AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY 103:565–569 (1997)

Brief Communication: The 1996 American Association of Physical Anthropology Membership Survey

TRUDY R. TURNER*
Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

KEY WORDS subfields; gender; tenure; students

ABSTRACT The 1996 AAPA membership survey included 1,033 participants. This number represents 72.6% of the membership of the association. Data were collected on gender, academic rank, highest degree, decade highest degree was awarded, discipline, employment, and rank order of subdiscipline. There are statistically significant differences (Chi-square test, $P < 0.05$) in subdiscipline membership including, among others, human and primate evolution, primatology, and skeletal biology. There are also gender differences in number of students and academic rank. Am J Phys Anthropol 103:565–569, 1997.

The Membership Committee of the American Association of Physical Anthropology, with the support of the Executive Committee of the Association, instituted the Association's first membership survey in 1996. The survey accompanied the 1996 membership renewal form and was designed to determine a demographic profile of the membership. This profile would allow the Association to determine the number of individuals in each subfield of the discipline, gender distributions across subfields and academic rank, and whether the submissions to the AJPA and the distribution of sessions at the annual meetings accurately reflect the distribution of individuals in each subfield.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey form was designed by the chair of the Membership Committee (T.R.T.), the president (Jere D. Haas) and past-president (Joyce E. Sirianni) of the Association, and the editor of the journal (Emöke J.E. Szathmáry). Responses were sent with the membership form to Allen Marketing, the organization that maintains the Association's membership and renewal records. Responses were detached from the renewal form and mailed to T.R.T. for analysis. Life members were sent a survey form under separate cover. These survey forms were mailed directly to T.R.T. Statistical analysis was conducted by the Social Science Research Facility (SSRF) of the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee using SPSS (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 1,033 responses tallied for this analysis, which represents 72.6% of the Association's total membership of 1,423. Figure 1 graphically represents frequencies of respondents' sex, age by decade, highest academic degree, discipline of highest degree, status, employment, and first and second rank order of subdiscipline.

Figure 1 also provides a diagrammatic representation of the percentage of members ranking their interest in the various subfields of physical anthropology. The subfields can be combined into general categories. For rank 1, 34.5% of members list primate/human evolution, 30.9% list skeletal/dental morphology, 24.9% list human biological variation, 7.6% list primatology, 3.4% list genetics, and 4.5% list other.

*Correspondence to: Trudy R. Turner, Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, POB 413, Bolton Hall, Milwaukee, WI 53201. E-mail: trudy@csd.uwm.edu

Received 27 March 1997; accepted 31 May 1997.

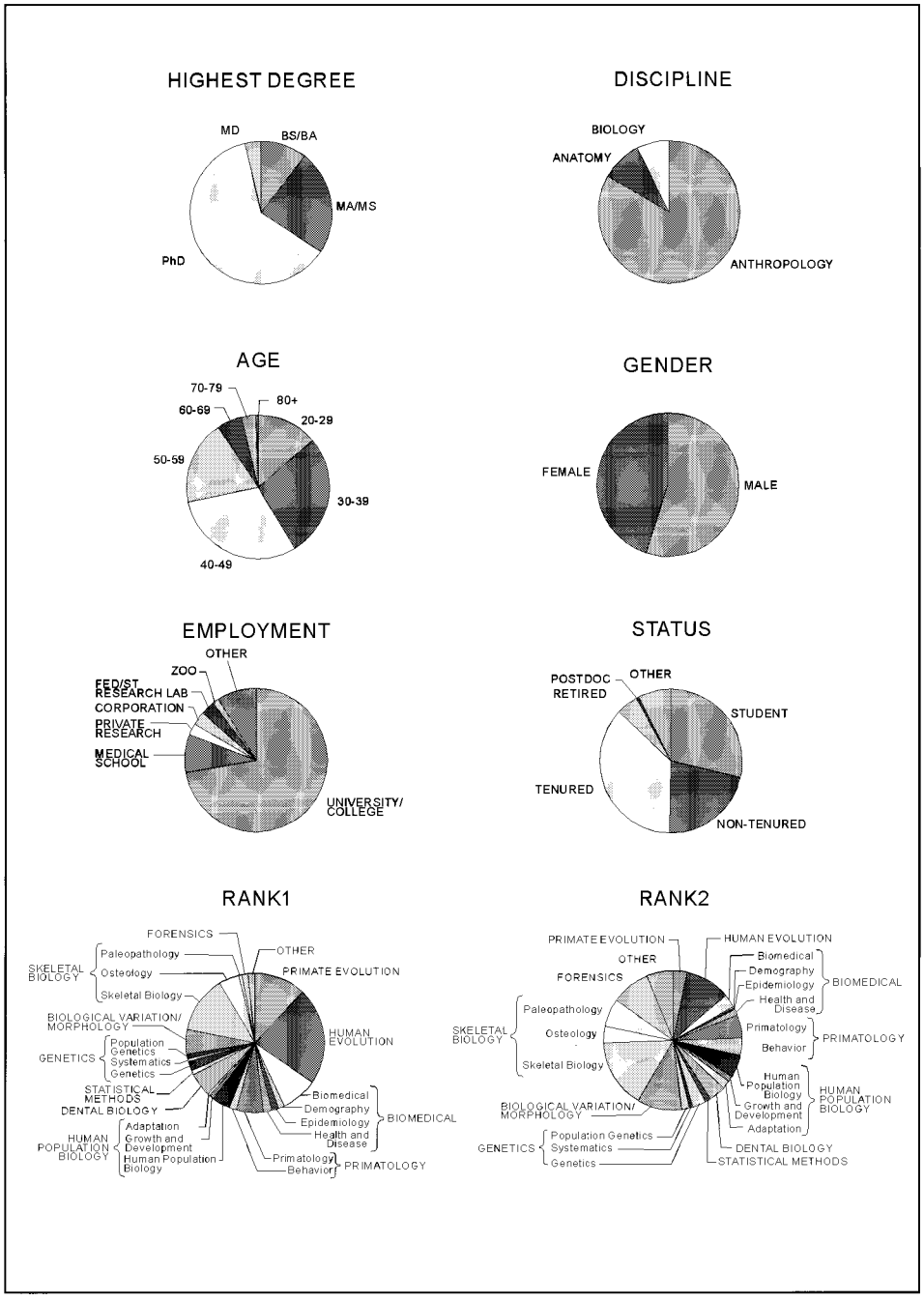

Fig. 1. Percent of reported highest degree, discipline, age, gender, employment, status, and rank 1 and rank 2 of subdiscipline within physical anthropology.

TABLE 1. Subfields with significant differences (chi-square test, P < 0.05) in male and female ranking

Specialty	Male (%)	Female (%)
Primate evolution	70.3	29.7
Human evolution	61.4	38.6
Growth and development	90.0	10.0
Adaptation	100.0	0
Statistical methods	90.0	10.0
Primatology	38.1	61.9
Primate behavior	21.1	78.9
Skeletal biology	42.5	57.5
Osteology	39.6	60.4

TABLE 2. Number and percent of males and females in each status category

Status	Male (#)	Male (%)	Female (#)	Female (%)
Student	91	35.1	168	64.9
Nontenured faculty	83	42.6	112	57.4
Tenured faculty	235	73.9	83	26.1
Retired	38	84.4	7	15.6
Postdoctoral	3	60.0	2	40.0
Other	31	47.0	35	53.0

An initial analysis of the survey indicated differences in male and female participation in some of the subfields. These were examined in more detail using a chi-square test for significance ($P < 0.05$). The number of males is significantly greater than the number of females in the fields of primate evolution, human evolution, growth and development, adaptation, and statistical methods. The number of females is significantly greater than the number of males in primatology, primate behavior, skeletal biology, and osteology (Table 1). There were no significant differences in the biomedical category (including demography, epidemiology, health, and disease), human population biology, dental anthropology, genetics (including systematics, population genetics), biological variation and morphology, paleopathology, and forensics.

Table 2 presents the number of individuals and the percentage of males and females in each of the status categories. Among students, 35.1% are males and 64.9% are female. These proportions change markedly with employment. Among nontenured faculty, 42.6% are male, while among tenured faculty 73.9% are male. Since these percentages include individuals of disparate ages and degrees, the data were limited to respondents with the Ph.D. degree only and were sorted by decade the degree was obtained. Table 3 presents the number of tenured and nontenured Ph.D.s by the decade in which the Ph.D. degree was awarded as well as the percentage of all responding males or females for that decade. For example, of those individuals who received their Ph.D. in the 1970s, 5.3% of the males are not tenured, 10.5% of the females are not tenured, and 85.3% of the males are tenured, while 78.9% of the females are tenured.

The most striking observations in this table include the disparities in male/female tenure in the 1950s and the 1980s. The 1950s sample size is very small and does not include retired individuals. In the 1980s, 20.4% of males with doctorates are not tenured, but the proportion more than doubles for women: 46.7% of those with doctorates are not tenured. In the 1970s and the 1990s, the percentage of tenured males and females is roughly the same; however, the actual numbers of individuals are very different. There are 81 tenured males but only 30 tenured females who received their degrees in the 1970s. In the 1980s there are 74 tenured males and only 33 tenured females. The greatest disparity in status becomes apparent when data from Table 3 are summed. For all respondents (including Masters, M.D., and others) for all decades, there are 83 tenured females compared to 235 tenured males.

There is a continuum of status from the graduate student category to the tenured professor rank. Over the continuum the sex distribution differs. The question that inevitably must arise is what happens to female students and female faculty members. Sixty-five percent of the students responding to this survey were female. The actual number of females is sharply reduced by the tenured faculty category. The Committee on the Status of Women in Anthropology (COSWA) reported in the 1996 *American Anthropology Association Guide to Departments* (Givens and Jablonski, 1996) that by 1982 41% of all Ph.D.s in anthropology were earned by women. In 1984 that percentage had risen to 51% and remained over 50% for the rest of the decade. These data include individuals

TABLE 3. Percent of males and females that are tenured or not tenured by decade in which Ph.D. was awarded

	Degrees in 1940s		Degrees in 1950s		Degrees in 1960s		Degrees in 1970s		Degrees in 1980s		Degrees in 1990s	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Nontenured												
Number of individuals	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	4	22	35	38	52
Percentage of their own sex in decade	0	0	0	0	2.6	0	5.3	10.5	20.4	46.7	66.7	66.7
Tenured												
Number of individuals	1	0	4	2	31	5	81	30	74	33	9	10
Percentage of their own sex in decade	33.3	0	26.7	66.7	79.5	71.4	85.3	78.9	68.5	44.0	15.8	12.8

from all subfields and are therefore not completely comparable to this survey. However, since 1974 there have been about the same number of anthropology Ph.D. degrees awarded each year (around 400), and the proportion of those Ph.D.s that were in physical anthropology remained the same. The COSWA survey can be used as a rough guide to trends in the discipline. Given these data, one would expect that half of nontenured and half of the tenured positions in the 1980s would be held by women. Individuals in the 1980 cohort have had between 7 and 13 years to get tenure. In the 1980s, 61% of the nontenured faculty are women, while 31% of the tenured faculty are women. The COSWA survey, like this survey, finds that men tend to cluster at the top of the academic ranks, while women are more dispersed throughout the ranks.

The 1980s information raises questions. Does it take women longer to get tenure? Did female students complete their degrees in a timely fashion? What is occurring to female physical anthropologists now?

Kramer and Stark (1994) have reviewed the status of women in archaeology. They looked at departments listed in the *AAA Guide* and found that women represent only 20% of full-time archaeologists while representing nearly half of all graduate students. The physical anthropology numbers are comparable to this pattern with a drop by about one-half in numbers from student to faculty member. This survey indicates that 65% of students are female, while only 36% of faculty are female.

The Society for American Archaeology, the Society for Historical Archaeology, and the American Anthropological Association have all created Committees on the Status of Women in Anthropology (Archaeology) to "ensure that women are more fully and effectively integrated into the field" (Wylie, 1994). Women's caucuses and networks have been active since the 1980s. The American Association of Physical Anthropologists does not have such a committee or such networks. These should be established along with mentoring programs for students and new faculty members. In addition, the membership survey should be continued to track trends in the discipline through time and to assess the effectiveness of network and mentoring programs. Additionally, a more in-depth interview survey could be instituted to determine what is happening to female students and faculty members. With respect to females, the AAPA needs to determine if students are finishing their degrees, getting jobs, and getting tenure in a timely fashion and commensurate with merit. A task force on membership composition has recently been charged with examining these questions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the Executive Committee of the American Association of Physical Anthropology for support for this project. I am grateful to Joyce E. Sirianni, Jere D. Haas, and Emöke J.E. Szathmáry for help in constructing the survey. I am also indebted to Joyce E. Sirianni and Emöke Szathmáry for a critical reading of this manuscript. I gratefully acknowledge Linda Hawkins of the Social Science Research Facility of the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee for the statistical

analysis and Donna Schenstrom of the Cartographic Services Laboratory, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, for preparation of the figure.

LITERATURE CITED

Givens DB, and Jablonski T (1996) 1996 AAA Survey of Departments. American Anthropological Association Guide 1996–1997. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

Kramer C, and Stark M (1994) The status of women in archeology. In MC Nelson, SM Nelson, and A Wylie (eds.): Equity Issues for Women in Archeology. Arlington, VA: Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association, No. 5, pp. 17–22.

Wylie A (1994) The trouble with numbers: Workplace climate issues in archeology. In MC Nelson, SM Nelson, and A Wylie (eds.): Equity Issues for Women in Archeology. Arlington, VA: Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association, No. 5, pp. 65–72.